



# News

SBA Number: 04-54

Release Date: March 25, 2004

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Billings Food Bank Director Named Home Based Business Advocate**

**HELENA, MT** – Sheryle Shandy, Executive Director of the Billings Food Bank, has been named the U.S. Small Business Administration's 2004 Home-based Business Advocate of the Year for Montana. Shandy will be recognized at SBA's annual Small Business Week awards ceremony May 7, 2004, at Missoula's Doubletree Inn, along with a cast of outstanding business owners and advocates.

In an effort to find a productive use for excess space at the Billings Food Bank, Sheryle Shandy cooked up the idea of establishing a commercial kitchen and food incubator. As a result, Montana Harvest Kitchens was born. Montana Harvest Kitchens is a 3600 sq. ft. commercial kitchen and food processing center that also houses a domestic (home-style) kitchen and classroom/training site. The kitchen is utilized by home-based entrepreneurs and provides them an affordable alternative to develop, refine and produce their Montana Made food products. The kitchen is available on a fee-per-hour basis to business owners with a food product. Novice business owners can rent space at the kitchen to develop and produce their food products until they outgrow the facility or can buy their own equipment.

Montana Harvest Kitchens has enabled home based entrepreneurs to "incubate" their food related businesses, incurring only the cost of product and hourly rent, thus avoiding debt associated with buying commercial kitchen equipment and leasing space or buying a building. Since the kitchen's inception, entrepreneurs armed with passion, determination and good recipes have developed their businesses and produced a variety of delicious food products ranging from salsa to bread dough. Shandy also opened the Montana Harvest Gift Shop next to the Billings Food Bank and Montana Harvest Kitchens. The gift shop provides clients of the kitchen, as well as other entrepreneurs, an opportunity to display and sell their food products. The shop also features gift items, art and collectibles by Montana artisans. Items are sold on commission or donated. Proceeds from Montana Harvest Kitchens and the Gift Shop benefit the Billings Food Bank.

Being an entrepreneur herself, Shandy is knowledgeable in areas of business planning, budgeting, health regulations, labeling and packaging. Shandy provides entrepreneurs with answers to any of their questions and when appropriate, refers them to the appropriate expert. Through Shandy's vision and entrepreneurial advocacy, Montana Harvest Kitchens and Gift Shop have provided entrepreneurs with a mechanism to achieve their goal of business ownership while providing a supplemental revenue stream for the Food Bank.

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Sheryle Shandy was nominated by Deanna South of the Billings Small Business Development Center at Big Sky Economic Development Authority. Other award winners being honored include: William Woody of Nightingale Nursing Services, Inc. of Missoula – Montana Small Business Person of the Year; Jack Morgenstern of Century Companies, Inc. of Lewistown – First Runner-up Small Business Person of the Year; Jennifer Keck of Big Sky Travel Nurses, Inc. in Conrad – Woman owned Business of the Year; Frederick “Rick” Larson of Employee Benefit management Services, Inc. – Entrepreneurial Success Award; Ryan Deskins of R&R Pressure Washing of East Helena – SBA Young Entrepreneur of the Year; Kim Wild of TowHaul Corporation, dba Smith Equipment USA of Belgrade – National Small Business Exporter of the Year; Mandi Luce-Heinle and Sarah Ann Hamlen of Innovative Marketing Solutions, LLC of Hathaway – Main Street Business of the Year; Jerry Sullivan of Flint Creek Valley Bank in Philipsburg – Financial Services Advocate of the Year; Flathead Business Journal of Kalispell – Small Business Journalist of the Year; Craig Smith of the Fort Peck Community College in Poplar – Minority Small Business Advocate of the Year; Joe Fletcher of the Great Falls Job Service Workforce Center – Veteran Small Business Advocate of the Year; and Joy Ott of Wells Fargo Bank Montana, N.A. in Billings – Women in Business Advocate of the Year.

For more information on SBA programs and services, contact the Montana SBA District office at (406) 441-1081 or log onto [www.sba.gov/mt](http://www.sba.gov/mt).

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